

THE SORROWS OF IRELAND

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The Sorrows of Ireland by Pat

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PAT

**THE SORROWS
OF IRELAND**

"THE
SORROWS
OF
IRELAND"

By "PAT" pseud. of P. D. Kenny.
AUTHOR OF "ECONOMICS FOR IRISHMEN"

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1907
W.S.

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Stewart. 19 Sept. 1907. 2/-

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PROLOGUE

AFTER ages of service and pain,
with her mark on the world and her failure at home,
in the door of the Empire we have Erin still doubting,
the smile looking out and the tear looking in,
from a retrospect rare in its beauty
and bravery, hope and romance ;
still distrusting herself and distrusted for that,
making fetters of freedom, and crimes of caprice ;
esteemed for her follies, and cursed by her virtues,
while nursing her vices, unaware of her strength.

Will she ever come in?—She can never go out ;
and her destiny rests in destruction or friendship,
the choice leaving no room for doubt.
I could lie to her lovingly, trade on her tenderly,
I market her anguish, and live on her cheers ;
but I tell her the truth and I ask her for nothing,
unless to live on and serve her as truly
as she has served all but her own.



THE SORROWS OF IRELAND.

I.—THE IRISH PROBLEM AND HOW I STUDIED IT.

THE national mind and will do not belong to the nation, but rather to a few privileged persons and groups, who thereby control the energy of the people to live on it, which makes progress impracticable, not merely in government, but also in life. That is my definition of the problem, but I defer the demonstration to tell first how intimately I have been forced into acquaintance with the data.

Up to now, Irish interests have found expression only in party arguments, cancelled by one another on equally bad evidence, with political pleading a kind of profession, and with the people as the clients on both sides of a cause that ends only with their money. I present no plea, but I assert a judgment, and submit the facts on which it is founded.

Six years ago I had two unexpected dignities inflicted on me, the ownership of our farm in Mayo, and with it the headship of our tribe, which required me to plough, to know agricultural chemistry, to sympathise with turnips, to understand pigs, and to be a village wirepuller, all on a training as a London journalist, chiefly in theatrical criticism. I lived at Brighton,

among classical concerts, church parades and lawn-tennis, when the news reached me that we had "lost the land", which meant destitution for my crowd of affectionate incapables; and though I could liquidate the liabilities to regain possession, that was all I could do. Smart essays on the drama in the West End could hardly appeal to agricultural capital in Connacht; and as to farm work, the crowd were even more useless than myself, for I was ignorant enough to learn, and they too full of the dead knowledge that kills intelligence. It was well I had no more money then, for I see now that they must have lost it for me as they had lost their own.

Farther to complicate the position, they had a small war among themselves, neither side acknowledging the headship of the other, though both would acknowledge mine, on the assumption that I was a wealthy man, who "got his money aisy, sittin' down all day wid little bits o' paper"; and who, therefore, might provide luxuriously for an indefinite number of definitely unproductive persons without bothering them about work. Work was not "respectable", and I was; therefore, I could not expect people to work. I belonged to the "educated" classes, who always looked down on the workers, and what was "education" for but to evade work? As became an "educated" man, I was ignorant of the soil and its uses; therefore, bound to keep clear of work as a necessity. A man might defy a convention or overcome a necessity, but who could face a combination of both? Clearly, I was expected to elevate the social status of the tribe to the level of complete uselessness, as the minimum essential to our respectability—and I a political economist. If I told them I was penniless,